

Grade 5
Module 3 - Instruction

At the start of this module, I was collaborating with my grade level teammates on identifying effective instructional strategies to improve students' reading comprehension. We discussed the benefits of oral feedback and the importance of instructing students "in the moment". I realized that although I provided consistent and accurate feedback to students about the quality of their work/performance, it was often general and delayed - not during instruction (Instruction; indicator 7). I started to research effective feedback strategies that provided students multiple ways of absorbing and implementing feedback during instruction by supporting and extending their understanding.

A major source of my new learning was through How to Give Effective Feedback to Students by Susan M. Brookhart, specifically chapter 4 How to Give Effective Oral Feedback. After reading this text, I learned that feedback is most beneficial when students are ready to accept it. Brookhart explains that in order for students to absorb the information that is being given, the feedback needs to be based on particular qualities of a student's work. In addition, I learned that oral feedback often leads to a further conversation facilitated by the teacher. Brookhart discusses "quick and quiet" feedback which is individual, extemporaneous feedback provided to students when a need is noticed. Brookhart recommends observing students in the act of learning, looking for where students make errors in the process and where they hesitate. This is done by asking the learner questions about what they are doing and why. I learned that successful students figure out how to connect outcome feedback with cognitive feedback. In other words, students are able to understand why they made decisions about the process of learning previously and use this information to cover the broader sense of a task. For struggling students, teachers need to scaffold this connection, explicitly pointing out how their particular efforts resulted in a particular performance.

I used my understanding of the "quick and quiet" feedback and began to implement it into my daily routine. During the language arts block, students are engaged in a mini lesson, independent reading, work stations, and small group instruction. I felt that the "quick and quiet" strategy would be useful because students are engaging in multiple literacy practices, where they are practicing the process of reading while using a variety of texts. I began observing my students at the nonfiction station. I observed two students reading "The Mini Page", which is a local newspaper for children. I asked the students what strategy they were working on and what task card they chose. One student explained that he was reading the article and then was going to summarize it orally to another student at the station. I asked the student to explain what he was planning to say in his oral

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summary. He discussed that the article was about a dog sled race called the Iditarod. I stated that good readers are able to support their summary with specific details about the article. I explained further that he was missing the evidence and details from the passage to support the main idea. I instructed him to go reread and highlight specific details about the Iditarod. I explained that after you highlight, you need to go back and choose at least three of the most important details about the article. I wanted my student to see where he needed to extend his thinking and reflect on the process. I realized that the "quick and quiet" strategy was most effective for students because it was geared towards individual feedback verses whole group or small group feedback.

I continued to observe and implement the "quick and quiet" strategy within my literacy block. As I visited with different students, I began jotting down informal notes about the feedback I was giving students. I was monitoring students' ability to implement the feedback that I was providing them. I wanted to see students trying the new strategies within the process of reading, practicing where they needed support. Using my previous notes, I would ask students how they are doing with feedback I gave them. I would ask students to use the text they were currently using to show what they are doing to help themselves. Students were making a point to implement the feedback that I instructed. For example, when revisiting with the student that was working on supporting details in a summary, I observed the he was highlighting details from the passage that he was reading. I also noticed that he was rewriting the details in his station's notebook. I complimented him on implementing the strategy that I had instructed him. He explained that taking note of the supporting details helped to remind him to include them in his oral summary. I was pleased to see that my student was using the feedback that I gave him and extended the strategy to compliment his learning process. The specific feedback that I instructed enabled this student to begin the process of going back into the text to find evidence.

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As part of my new learning on oral feedback, I attended a professional development at Capital Region Education Council (CREC), "Getting to the Heart of the Common Core State Standards: Focus on Comprehension", facilitated by Dr. Nancy Boyles. From this workshop, I learned that immediate feedback has more worth than feedback given after an assignment is completed. Providing feedback about the learning process and practice in the moment increases the students' opportunities to repeat and continue the practice. However, immediate feedback should not be confused with feedback at every instance a child makes an error because this may actually be counterproductive as it intrudes on the learning process. Dr. Boyles explained that we can provide feedback to students when they are orally explaining their reading comprehension, but it is important first to listen to students during the reading process then give feedback based on their reading. This type of feedback is nonintrusive and allows students to deepen their understanding when the feedback is given immediately after their reading.

I implemented my new learning about nonintrusive feedback with my small reading intervention group where students are working towards improving their fluency. Students are monitored weekly through oral reading fluency and MAZE assessments. As part of my reading intervention, I use nonfiction passages from the Read Naturally program. Students are asked to read the passage out loud for one minute for their initial "cold" read, which is reading the passage without prior exposure to it. After the cold read, I provide explicit instruction on a fluency strategy that students can then practice using the same passage. Students are then timed for a minute and this is called a hot read. Students graph the cold and hot read each day to monitor their own progress. After learning that feedback should be immediate and nonintrusive, I decided that a perfect opportunity to give non interruptive immediate feedback would be right after the students' cold read. As I listened to one of my students read aloud a passage about 'Magic Johnson', I noticed that he was second guessing what he was reading, which would limit the

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amount of words read in a minute because he would then have to reread. Although self-correcting is a great strategy, in this instance the student needed to keep the phrasing fluent. After the student read the entire passage, I explained to the student that he had done a great job with his expression and pronunciation of the words. I began to give immediate feedback to my student about second guessing what he had read and how practicing appropriate phrasing may keep him from doing this. I then introduced the scooping strategy to him. This strategy is where students actually phrase parts of a sentence by scooping two to three words. Scooping the words actually gives the reader a moment to comprehend the text without having to reread. I used the first paragraph of the 'Magic Johnson' passage to model how to scoop using your reading finger under a chunk of words. As I scooped and read, I asked my student what he noticed was happening. He explained that I was reading the words but not too fast and not too slow.

Each day during reading intervention, I would listen to students read out loud their "cold" read in order to give them immediate feedback based on their reading. Based on my observations, I would provide a strategy that would help students with their specific fluency need. Through this immediate feedback, I noticed that students' weekly oral reading fluency and MAZE assessments were slowly improving. Students were also applying the feedback during literacy stations. I observed one of my intervention students reading and recording their voice with the tape recorder as they were using the scoop strategy. The student was listening to himself and noticing how the scooping strategy was impacting his reading rate. I also noticed the student's confidence was growing as he was realizing that the strategy worked! I have learned that listening to students is part of effective feedback and at the appropriate time I need to listen to my students fully before interrupting. Through this nonintrusive feedback, students begin to correct themselves because they are given the opportunity to engage in their learning before and after the feedback.

During a school-wide professional development on academic rigor, I had another opportunity to expand my understanding about effective feedback. We collaborated as a team to come up with our school's definition of academic rigor. While working in a small subgroup, my colleagues and I were discussing how now that we had an idea about what academic rigor meant, how were we going to push ourselves to employ it on a consistent basis? As we brainstormed ideas, I realized that oral feedback would be an effective strategy to promote academic rigor. As our collegial discussion developed, I concluded that guiding questions is a form of immediate feedback. The key component to the feedback guiding questions is

listening attentively to students. By doing this, students are extending their thinking through questions in order to deepen understanding and not merely to make corrections. I began reflecting on how I know my students' overall learning and that I can use this knowledge in forming feedback questions.

From my new learning, I brainstormed ideas on how I can make sure that the questions I am asking are accurate and are indeed effective feedback. I decided to use the daily learning objective and to foresee feedback questions that may arise in guided reading groups. I believed that this would be the best opportunity for me to provide effective feedback that students would respond to and implement. As part of the fifth grade curriculum, students learn to infer why an author chose to write a given text. This objective seems to be difficult for students to understand because they need to look beyond the surface of the text and find a deeper understanding. I began the lesson by reviewing the chapter that we had just read in the novel, Rules, by Cynthia Lord. After reviewing previously read events from the book, I asked students if they knew anything about Cynthia Lord, the author. Everyone shook their heads and I asked how can we dig deeper into the text to find the author's reason for writing this book? We began discussing the main character, Catherine, who has been struggling with friends because she feels her autistic brother is embarrassing. Students were connecting to their own relationship with their brothers and sisters and I replied to their connections with the following feedback: "I can see that many of you have connections to this feeling that Catherine is having. Do you think the author could have had similar feelings?" Students jumped into the conversation explaining that maybe the author had an autistic brother or she had a special needs child. I commented on their thinking, "Yes this could have been something very close to the author's heart because she did indeed live this. But what does she want us as readers to learn by sharing this experience?" As our conversation continued, I found that giving feedback based on the students' discussion and then using that knowledge to guide their thinking further was most effective at deepening their understanding.

As I continued to implement the feedback questions in my reading groups, I was noticing that students were recognizing the immediate feedback that I was providing and using that information to expand their thinking further. The impact on student learning that I see is students' ability to extend their own learning by listening to their peers and building off of their understanding. As a result of the feedback questioning, students were thinking in the moment about what they needed to do and how they would move on with their response, their thinking. For

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instance, students' conversation dug deeper into the author's experiences and recognized that the author wanted readers to understand how it feels to have a sibling with special needs. Students began to discuss that it can be hard for someone to understand what obstacles and joy an individual with special needs can bring because they may have never had the opportunity to. I realized that feedback questioning is different from the questions I was asking students before this module. I found that the difference is that I am now attentively listening for students' current understanding and merely for what I want to hear or to wait to hear for the "right" answer.

Through this module, I have learned to implement feedback strategies that will enable me to provide meaningful and effective feedback that will guide students in the process of learning. Although, I have seen results in my students' performance in reading, I want to see this continue to improve. As a teacher, I aim to provide immediate and meaningful feedback that students will remember and continue to use as they grow. I have come to realize that different forms or styles of feedback are needed at different instances depending on the instructional purpose and the students' needs.